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THE
WICKEDEST
WOMAN
IN
NEW YORK.

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1918

I Dedicate

THE
WICKEDEST
WOMAN IN NEW
YORK TO THE BEST WOMAN
IN THE WORLD, AND MY MOST EX-
TRAVAGANT HOPE IS THAT ALL WHO KNOW
THIS LATTER LADY WILL PUR-
CHASE A COPY OF MY
BOOK IN COM-
PLIMENT TO
HER.

THE WICKEDEST WOMAN

IN

NEW YORK.

By C. H. WEBB,

AUTHOR OF "LIFFITH LANK," "ST. TWEL'MO," ETC., ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY HOWARD.

"Preserve thy sighs, unthrifty girl,
To purify the air;
Thy tears to thread, instead of pearl,
On bracelets of thy hair."

NEW YORK:
G. W. Carleton, Publisher.
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ARGUMENT.

THERE is a moral purpose in my book—there must be, for I had one in hand when I set out and none when I got through. Look for it carefully, stick a pin in it when found, and may my loss prove the reader's gain. Having striven throughout to be serious and instructive, 'tis likely that I shall make people laugh; for to be funny when I mean to be serious, and serious when I mean to be funny, is a faculty which I share in common with some of the most eminent humorists of the age. If any lean and misshapen jokes be found, remember that this line of writing is fearfully provocative, and know that I have manfully resisted the temptation to make very many more. Of all men in the world I am perhaps the most incompetent to write about wicked women—for I do not know any. Nor indeed do I think that an amusing book could have been built up on the basis which this title arbitrarily implies. To smile at the repulsive is quite as bad as to shudder at the ridiculous, and I pity, but have no desire to please, the man who could laugh over a John Allen. The wickedness of a woman, no matter how ludicrously drawn, would be rather ghastly material for mirth, but at the follies of the girl we may legitimately laugh. A certain probability should underlie even creations of the imagination, since one can neither laugh nor cry with good grace over what is impossible. And on the principle that mustard is only relishable when it seasons meat, I hold that all comic pictures should have somewhat sober and truthful backgrounds. It is well to have good principles though we fail to illustrate them in practice, and having put forward my claim to their possession, I have said all I have thus to say, and more by half than I intended to in the beginning.

C. H. W.

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THE

WICKEDEST WOMAN

IN NEW YORK.

Chapter 1.

SHE rose from her delicious sleep, and put aside her soft brown hair—

That is to say, she took it from her toilet-table, where it lay in a tangle with cologne bottles and

pin-cushions and crimping irons, and put it aside for her maid to brush.

"Before dressing your hair you must first catch your hair," as Mrs. Glass suggests in her most excellent cookery book. The maid had no trouble in doing this, for it lay ready to hand.

No one would have thought at first glance—nor, indeed, at a second—that this was or could be the Wickedest Woman in New York. For her eyes were a beautiful blue, fringed by long sweeping lashes—and when she let these lashes fall on men in a careless way, it was time for the interference of Mr. Bergh. Strange to say, the softer she laid them on, the harder 'twas to bear. Her hair (you see some of it there on the chair) was a delicious brown —and her maid did it up so. Her complexion was of that exquisite blending seldom seen, but generally known as "strawberries smothered in cream;" (any berry, let me remark, like a home, is but a small potato without its smother) which perhaps explains why most young gentlemen were always ready to do a few spoons on her, to the utter neglect of many maturer maidens who thought (and not without reason) that their age and irreproachableness entitled them to some consideration. But as for her figure—there was a wavy grace about that which passes description.

"Never too late to Bend," she thought; so when it became settled that 'twas to be the fashion, she adopted the Grecian. Not the common style, however. By the assistance of an ingenious modiste she contrived a mechanism so arranged that when she threw either foot forward it worked a lever which pried her back—pried her back forward, I mean, at the most singularly graceful angle known on the promenades.

You know what the mechanical forces are—cords and pulleys, screws, levers, and wheels.

She did not walk thus because she had proud, but because she was pried. So completely was she geared down, in fact, that she might be said to always travel in cog. Under such circumstances how could her value be recognized! Ignorant of the lever at her back, how was one to know what a purchase was there? And so it happened that a great many shrewd men passed her day after day in the street without having the least idea that she was a good thing to buy; but the right man for the wrong place always comes along at last, as will be seen in the sequel.

Undoubtedly not a few of my readers would like me to explain the mechanism above hinted at, and give patterns, after the manner of the "Bazar," by which they could get up the thing for their own wear. But it will at once be seen that a drawing could not be understood unless the machine were shown adjusted to the person—and by no possibility could it be treated as an outside garment. With Mr. Wegg I can only remark, at this juncture, that a fuller explanation would not be proper in the presence of ladies, and express a wish that nothing further be said about it.

Well, I've got my heroine up, but what am I to do with her now? She's not dressed, and, to tell the truth, I wish we were all well out of this. Certainly 'twill never do to leave the Wickedest Woman

in New York alone for a single minute; still I do not know that it is quite proper to stay. The point is a nice one, and must be debated at length; meanwhile we may as well stand where we are—it is debatable ground.

"Finette! Finette!!"—the maid answers readily to the name, though christened Bridget O'Flaherty—and now we are in for it. One should never leave after a performance begins. Oh, chaste Minerva, aid us! Interpose thy shield if any mysteries too sacred for profane eyes be unveiled—and, above all, don't let us get caught!

Let the fashions change as they might, there was one Thing to which our young lady clung pertinaciously. She was determined to live in hoops if she died in despair—

"Hoop springs perennial in the female chest,"

and a voice is heard in the air, "Finette, come help me on with This!"

Well, through with This, the mistress told the maid to bring That.

You see here what the effect sometimes is when you put This and That together. *Opus coronat finem!*

By way of making my meaning clear, it will be noticed that I use a lay figure. This for several reasons. First, because lay figures cannot lie; second, propriety must be considered.

I sincerely hope that I am guilty of no impro-

priety in introducing such subjects (or objects) in these pages. They are prominently shown in all shop-windows, and dangle like shrimp-nets over shop-doors, so that it is difficult to get down town without having your head caught in one. Certainly I do not think they are pretty, and never would have chosen cuts of them for purposes of ornamentation; they are used for illustration's sake alone.

The reader who expects that I am on the point of telling right here how the wearer gets into these Things will be disappointed. Young ladies require no instruction, and as for young men, 'tis rightfully decreed that it shall cost them something to learn.

Go to, young man, go to; or, rather, go to church, two, and come home one; 'tis like that then you'll know all about it.

There is crimping, and twisting, and braiding. "Oh, Finette! you pull awfully, you do; you Great Awkward Thing!"

To most young ladies this world, it will be observed, is a world of Things. If the feminine nomenclature be right, Hamlet was not wide of the truth in stating that there are more things in heaven and in earth than are dreamed of in the common philosophy. Possibly Finette O'Flaherty was a thing—scarcely a thing of beauty, however, nor like to be a joy forever.

It is something to see the complexion laid on. "Strawberries and cream!" Appropriately Finette gives it to her mistress in a saucer—a pink one.

"My shoes, Finette;" and these are what the girl brings:

No mistake on the part of the O'Flaherty; these are indeed the shoes of the period—soles thinner than writing-paper, heels six inches high, set in the middle of the foot, and tapering down to the size of a five-cent piece. Besides being painful to wear, they are undoubtedly productive of positive and permanent injury to the health.

Were I a physician instead of a metaphysician, and permitted to dispense pills as well as puns, if a girl so shod came to me for advice, complaining of numerous aches and pains, I should say: "Young woman, go heel thyself—but not in that way. Get shoes that you can walk comfortably in, and use them persistently."

How young women are shod may be no affair of mine, but my right to "shoo" them when they voluntarily appear as guys is as inalienable as that to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness under difficulties. And I protest (in toe-toe) against the footing on which women now seek to put themselves—they can get up their backs sufficiently without the aid of such heels. In making ladies' shoes, I trust that for the future the cobbler will stick to his last—and not build quite so far beyond it.

But all this while our young lady has been dressing; perhaps it was well that I distracted attention from her feet. Avoid extremes! She is now ready for the street—and I submit whether or not she does not look as though she belonged to it.

You were involuntary witnesses of how charming she looked when fresh from her delicious sleep, before this "getting up." I ask, do you not consider it superlatively Wicked to spoil God's handiest work in that fashion?

Chapter 2.

I FORGOT, in the last chapter, to state, that the young lady got her breakfast while we were turning over her shoes. If you insist that she had not time, oblige me by supposing that this morning she went without it, for 'tis certain that she's already on the Avenue, leading Cupid by a string.

Cupid is her dog—which perchance may howl anon, or anonymously. It always seemed to me that he had better been called Sirius, being a Skye terrier, but there's not much in a dog's name, after all, —unless a man happen to get it.

A gentleman, in allusion to Cupid's disposition to make universal war, once asked his mistress why she did not call him Mars.

"Because he's not ma's; he's mine," she replied.

Mythology was not taught in the boarding-school where the young lady graduated, nor, for that matter, was astronomy. The pupils, however, were perfected on the piano, and taught most modern languages—except English. One should not expect women to know a little of everything—nor much of anything.

I regret to record that Cupid did not behave well on the street, but rushed about with head to the ground, on some invisible trail (with the air of a veritable cognoscenter), dragging his mistress at his tail as though she were a tin can. Moreover, he had a hatred of beggars, and barked at them furiously—unmindful of the danger which sometimes ensues from accidentally barking up the wrong tree.

This morning he bit a man who put out his hand for a penny. In parts of the country where a beggar asks for a "bit," to give him a bite might be considered rather a good joke; but this mendicant

failed to see the thing in quite that light, retorting with a kick which nearly landed Cupid in that heaven where the dog-star is properly permitted to rage—the land of Canine, may we not call it?

Our young lady reprimanded the man sharply, and called him both a brute and a fellow, threatening to tell her papa and the policeman. Had the policeman been at his post on the corner 'twould have gone hard with the man, for he wore very bad clothes; but that preserver of the peace, happening at the moment to be making love to a cook down an area-way, under pretence of examining the fastenings on the gate, the caitiff escaped for that time.

Nor, I regret to say, was the young lady much appeased, when the poor man showed his calf (by no means a fatted one), out of which Cupid had taken a piece considerably larger than a biscuit—which was imprudent in the dog. In this day of false calves I dare not so much as touch veal pie.

To return to our mutton, or rather to Cupid's—our young lady fairly turned up her nose at the poor man's calf, nor did she forgive him for his treatment of her favorite, even when she saw how much had

been taken where there was so little to spare. On the contrary, her sympathy was excited for the dog because of the great mouthful he had swallowed; she feared it might not agree with him—for he was not accustomed to eating beggar.

And she pursued her way past all the clubs—which she faced with the daring of a Pocahontas.

'Twas nothing that when opposite the Eclectic—so called, because there's not much to choose among the members—all were in the window, for they always are there; but to have the fossils of the Union, the megatheriums of the Manhattan, and the Narcissuses of the New York rush from their whist-tables and looking-glasses, showed that something unusual was indeed in the wind and sailing down the avenue.

I don't think I have yet mentioned the hat. Here it is.

What do you think of such an owl head on young shoulders?

Down town to the dry-goods stores, for she had shopping to do. It is worthy of remark that she avoided places where female clerks were employed, preferring to patronize those in which young men stood behind the counter. And I observe that this is a feminine peculiarity, noticeable even in those

who insist that man shall fill no vocation which woman can attempt—whether or not because young men are better judges of goods or more patient and polite, I cannot determine.

"Have you any canary-colored silk?"

"Yes, miss."

The dry-goods clerk knows that he can never go amiss in calling a woman so. Every female customer he addresses as "miss," though plainly old enough to be madams twice over—he insinuates that the bloom is still on the wry.

"Show me some."

And a dozen pieces being thrown on the counter, she soon made them look like crows' nests rather than canaries'.

"Have you any changeable rep silks?"

"Yes, miss."

"Show me some."

And a dozen pieces being thrown down, she speedily reduced them to a demirep condition.

"Have you any nice *cuir* colored goods?"

"Yes, miss."

"Show me some."

And a dozen pieces being dragged down, she made them look queerer.

"Have you anything to match this?"

"Yes, miss."

And another dozen pieces (she was too much engrossed to take heed of the dozens) being thrown down, she finally bought—an eighth of a yard of one, and ordered it sent home within half an hour.

And so on through the different departments, tangling precious yards of Round Point, d'Angleterre, Valenciennes, Brussels, Honiton, Cluny, and making a sad jumble of French and Irish poplins, shawls, mantillas, and the like.

To show you one counter will do for all. *Ex pede*,

&c.—'tis not expedient in this case to show you more.

Would you not call this an exhibit of counter-irritation?

Now, putting those worthy young men to such great trouble may not have been Wicked, but I scarcely think it could be called Good!

Chapter 3.

Returned home, she found a bouquet from Augustus—of whom by and by.

Opening her inlaid writing-desk she selected the

worst pen she could find, and a piece of perfumed paper, and wrote him a note, in which she thanked him for his bouquet, and pronounced it beautiful—spelling beautiful with a big B and two l's. She was given to that sort of thing, but Augustus didn't mind it. There is a tide in the affairs of men when they are indifferent to orthography. At this time he was too much under the spell of her eyes to much care how she distributed the other letters of the alphabet.

Augustus was a young man who had a good time coming (he hoped) and a moustache come. He had patent-leather gaiters which held the boot-blacks (those little sons who "shine for all") at bay; and his pantaloon legs were cut so small that 'twas easier to put his legs outside of them than in. His coat ended exactly where it should have continued (in which respect the tail did not resemble the one I am writing), and the lappels were turned so widely over and so far back, that one could almost see his back-bone. He danced well, carried a little cane, came of an old family, and was in business in Wall street. He belonged to a club or two, and believed in ritualism and Augustus—outside of which beliefs he had no religion at all. Not a good fellow according to my interpretation of it, I will not undertake to say that he was a bad one. Such as he was, however, there are many like him—the more's the pity!

He had met our heroine in the usual way, and been in attendance on her ever since. They were not exactly engaged, but it had come to be (on his part, at least) an "understood thing." She allowed him to attend her to balls and operas, to send her bouquets, and do her little errands about town—which she should not have done if her intentions were not honorable. In return for this devotion she danced with young Brown, whom he did not like;

praised young Jones, whom he detested; and did not frown down the attentions of old Biggs, of whom he had reason to be jealous.

Augustus was to accompany her to a ball that evening—hence the bouquet.

The lunch-bell ringing just as her little note was sealed with blue wax, the young lady turned from lover to lobster with her customary versatility, taking

the flowers with her—to waste their sweetness on the dessert air!

After satisfying the inner woman she made a charming toilet (to regale the outer man) and came down into the parlor. Seating herself at the piano, she played a number of airs from La Duchesse and Barbe Bleu with an *abandon* which few of the most abandoned ladies of the Offenbach stage could equal—not remembering that her mamma was lying down in the room above, suffering from a nervous headache.

While the *sabre de mon père* was still ringing on the air, young Brown was announced, and she professed herself delighted to see him, though in reality

annoyed at his coming, as she expected young Jones, and feared she could now have a *tête-à-tête* with neither one nor the other.

Young Brown fell into line at the piano—and faced the music, turning it over for her while she rattled off Italian airs and sweet plaintive ballads; bowling her eyes at him over the tender in a way that took him clean off his pins, but never losing her own poise once.

To this day he does not know what he said nor what she sung; a rosy cloud lay over his senses—but he has a clear recollection that it was superlatively nice, and that he doubted at the time if ever there

was such another artless, affectionate, true-hearted girl in this world.

And all this while the flowers at her side breathed their fragrance through the room in mute intercession for the young man who paid fifteen dollars for them that morning.

When the caller took his hat to go, she plucked one of the sweetest rosebuds from the vase, and with her own fair hands pinned it in his button-hole.

"With the language?" said he.

She turned on him a glance to which no language can do justice, and he went away, feeling fine as a fiddle, and casting about in his mind who should be his groomsman.

The young lady watched his going through the blinds for a moment, and then caught up her dog in her arms with a light laugh, "Why, he's got crooked legs and he turns his toes in. Why didn't you bite him, Cupid?"

A judicious speculator would have sold young Brown stock short after that, I think.

Ere she had time to pick up the sabre of her father, where she laid it down, the bell jingled again, and young Jones dropped in. He was a chatty fellow, and they talked about parties and balls. *Apropos* of that, she hoped he would be at Mrs. Flamtoddle's that evening; she should be quite *au désespoir* if he were not—and, as she said this, she looked at him. That look cooked his goose at once, and he became confiding and slightly incoherent.

He talked to her of his business, and told her how it flourished, and how he hoped to form a connection the next week that would increase his profits largely; and then—and then—

"Then, what?" she innocently asked.

He would be in a position to marry; and if only—if only—

"Gracious me! it's nearly half-past three, and I

promised to call for Clara an hour ago; she'll be *so* mad if I keep her waiting; you'll tell me all about it another time—and come soon—*won't* you?"

Young Jones went down the steps elate, with both a rosebud and a heliotrope in his button-hole. So elastic was his tread that you might have thought a spring sidewalk was laid on that side of the street—though 'twas the middle of summer.

"Oh, it's such fun!" said our young lady, as she watched him through the convenient Venetian blind.

Seating herself at the piano she dashed off, "*J'aime le militaire, j'aime le militaire*"—though the proceedings of the afternoon that far would argue that she had no particular objection to civilians.

Strange to say, she forgot her engagement with Clara as soon as young Jones had gone, and it was quite as well she did so, for a few minutes after Old Biggs rung himself in.

Biggs, a fat, but rich old gentleman, did not care for music, and so the young lady brought out Planchette as soon as possible.

Would he please put his hands on with her?

At first he would'nt, for he didn't believe in it; it wouldn't move for him, and there was no use in his trying.

But she was sure he was mistaken, with so *much* magnetism about him; they two could surely move it—and *wouldn't* he try to please her?

Of course he would (who could resist such blandishments?) and so plumped down his paraffine paws, as though demanding change at some bank counter. In resting her hands on the board she contrived to bring them in contact with his fluffy fingers. Under such circumstances 'tis not surprising that Old Biggs soon concluded there was more magnetism about him than he had before dreamed of, especially when the board began to walk about.

"Ask it something," said the young lady; and Biggs, at his wits'-end for a question, inquired how old he was—trembling terribly immediately thereafter at his indiscretion.

"Thirty-five," wrote Planchette. He was *fifty-five* if a day!

"Is that right, Mr. Biggs?" queried the young lady.

"I believe so," he replied, quite delightedly, and drawing a freer breath; "but didn't you make it do that?"

"I?" she said, reproachfully, lifting her long lashes and whipping the pool of his shallow eyes with one of her most killing flies. "Oh, Mr. Biggs! how could you think *I* would do such a thing? Indeed I did not."

Then Mr. Biggs, who, like all fat people, was easily affected in warm weather, waxed quite sentimental, and gushed a little, asking a number of tender questions: Would he ever marry? and could he make a home happy? and was there any one in the world who could care for him, &c., &c.? All of these questions being answered in the affirmative, he asked:

"What's her name?"

"Oh, Mr. Biggs," cried the young lady, "how inquisitive!" and, as the board began to move—

"I declare, if it is not writing my name!"

Sure enough, there was "Julia," plain as a pike-staff.

"Why, the naughty, naughty Thing!" she cried, and hid her blushing face in her hands.

Then Mr. Biggs turned from Planchette to ask Julia questions, and he put them in such a practical business way that she blushed more and more; and when he attempted to take her hand in his, it was not

altogether in affectation that she struggled to withdraw it; for she once picked up a jelly-fish on the sea-shore, and somehow his hand was suggestive of that experiment. But when he went on to tell how much he made by one contract to clothe a single regiment of soldiers during the war, and spoke

of a house he intended to build on a lot he had just purchased on the Avenue, three feet six inches wider than the Sarsaparilla man's, and ten feet deeper, she became so interested that the afternoon was gone before she knew it.

Old Biggs waddled away with all that remained of the bouquet, and the young lady sent Finette down to the florist's on the corner to get one as near like it as possible. "Gus won't know the difference, and anyway it was about spoiled," she said.

Watching Mr. Biggs from the window staggering under the immense bouquet (even in the roseate light of its flowers he looked but like a green-grocer

with a cabbage), she thought he was scarcely so graceful as "Gus," and she remembered, besides, a rumble in his throat, as he spoke of his projects for the future.

It occurred to her that though she'd like to sit in his carriage, she could very well dispense with the rumble; but at dinner she remarked to her mamma that Mr. Biggs had called, and that really she had no idea he could be so interesting—so entertaining.

What think you of the summing up of the young lady's afternoon? Three fellows fixed like cockchafers on a pin, to buzz awhile for her amusement, and then be let go carrying the holes with them.

I know that generally this thing is not considered superlatively Wicked, but it seems to me that the Woman who does it stands in need of the prayers of several congregations. There are milk-and-Water streets where special missions to these deep-dyed and high-stepping sinners might with propriety be established, as well as in the one which it was lately undertaken to regenerate.

Chapter 4.

In the evening came Augustus and the ball.

Julia was in high spirits, for her dress was a triumph. Mme. Millefleurs had been at work on it for a month.

She wore (I quote now from the description of the Jenkins of the occasion) a dress of yellow tulle *bouillonnée*, with a black corsage embroidered with gold, a tunic in the form of a court mantle, looped

behind with broad, black ribbons, and over all this a green satin sash. The panier was a wonder in its way—and indeed in the way of all present. By a singular coincidence the band was playing

"The Campbells are coming" as she entered the room.

Lest I be accused of not knowing how to dress a heavy swell of the feminine persuasion, let me remark that my heroine wears the same dress which the Princess Metternich came out in at a diplomatic entertainment lately.

In her hair she wore several jewels, and a string of precious stones was clasped round her throat—thus all were enabled to see where the precious tones came from with which she pelted a parlor when she took her seat at the piano.

The worst that criticism could say of the ball-dress was, that, like the ball itself, it began and ended too late.

Julia was in her element—that being understood to be gas-light. In French she did not greatly excel, but she was great on the German. How many times she danced I am not prepared to state with that precision which is the soul of statistics, but she lost very little time—if we except a necessary stop of fifteen minutes to take in oysters, truffled turkey, and sparkling Moselle.

And how she flirted! There was one captain in particular (a Captain Fitzfaddle, if I remember rightly) who entered the army when peace was declared—and had remained there ever since.

He thought it much pleasanter to open a ball than to be opened by one, evidently, and I don't know but that he was right.

He wore a new uniform, with all the buttons that the regulations would allow, and had on his epaulets for the occasion. He was a much nicer-looking soldier than those horrid old veterans, who have wooden legs and queer makeshifts for arms, and smell of powder and army rations. I don't wonder that Julia took to him.

But it so offended old Biggs that he never came near her, and Julia secretly felt rather glad of it; for, as already hinted, he was short-breathed, and when he danced you'd have thought a locomotive was going round the room on an upgrade.

She flirted with young Brown, and young Jones, as well (or, rather, as badly)—and gave each of them a chance to say something to her in the conservatory when the wine was in their foolish heads; and then laughed in their faces, and protested it was too ridiculous, and did any one ever hear of such a thing—which quite spoiled the remainder of the evening for them.

As for poor Augustus, who accompanied her there—and sent a preliminary bouquet (besides stripping the table at supper, and creating comments on the enormity of his appetite, when in reality he was waiting on her) she scarcely noticed him—which was simply natural, and precisely what might have been expected.

Either this treatment or some secret trouble weighed upon his spirits; he was less vivacious than usual—and, in consequence, appeared much better.

It is only when a tin-pan or a brain-pan rattles loudly that one knows for a certainty there is little in it.

Poor young man! on this particular evening my earnest sympathies were enlisted in his behalf. His moustache drooped, visibly, and it was only by constant coaxing that the ends could be made to do their duty at all. He tried to perk up, and led his own forlorn hope into a bright bevy of ladies, but he signally failed to tell the jokes he had borrowed during the day as though they were his own; and, though he introduced some very clever conundrums, when others gave them up he could not remember the answers himself—which in a measure deprived them of point. Altogether, his career that evening was not a success, and he labored under the additional disadvantage of being thoroughly conscious of it all the while.

But if that muscular young heathen suffered, and felt like going home, think of Julia's mother; picture the distress of that poor *feme-covert*, who literally had not where to lay her head—for she did not waltz.

The young men dodged her at supper, and the gentleman of the old school who took her in, got her nothing to eat. Too dignified to crowd up to the table, she did not succeed in getting there until everything was gone.

Certainly she could sit or stand with her back against the wall, and talk with Mrs. Tolderol and Mrs. Do-ra-me, but this was neither novelty nor luxury. Each of those most respectable ladies talked about her respective daughter, and when the one expatiated upon her Clara's obedience, and the other dilated on her Anna's economy, Mrs. McDoodle felt that they were really casting reflections on her Julia.

But trust the mother of the period for ability to

retaliate in kind. She should always be thankful, she said, that Julia outgrew a slight lameness with which she was troubled when a child. One would scarcely notice any awkwardness now, particularly when dancing—(Julia was graceful as a fawn on the floor, while Clara Tolderol moved through the mazes like a bewildered kangaroo); she was glad, too, that Julia didn't get her nose from her father, no girl could be pretty with a pug; Anna Do-ra-me's was by no means Grecian—it had the bend, certainly, but 'twas upward.

Julia made no return for the battle which her mother did with these accumulated ages in her behalf. Despite of nods, and winks, and repeated "my-child — my-child — it-is-time-to-go-homes"—snap shots taken at her as she flew by in the dance—she made no response, other than once to cry—

"If it *is* time, mamma, why don't you go?"

Not until four of the clock, and only by incessant scratching then, did our poor fidgetty mother succeed in gathering this flighty chicken under her wing and getting her into the coupé.

Our young lady made a number of men miserable that evening; turned night into day in contempt of the order of the universe, and worried her poor mother nearly to death. Yet a great many girls do all these things frequently, and would start in surprise if one called them Wicked.

Chapter 5.

The next day Julia breakfasted so after time that it might have passed for a late lunch or an early dinner.

She was subdued during the day, and pensive. Not on account of her sins, though indirectly they underlaid it all. No belle, more than any bow, can endure a constant strain. After eight hours' dancing and dissipation, it was no wonder that Julia found herself unstrung in a direct proportion to her former tension.

Finette O'Flaherty had an unhappy time of it, too. She could do nothing rightly, but was scolded up-stairs and down-stairs as well as in the lady's chamber, so it is little wonder that before night she came to the conclusion that her country's wrongs were nothing to hers.

Mr. McDoodle never saw much of his daughter, and seldom expressed a wish to see more, but this day after dinner he signified a desire to speak with her in the library.

She acquiesced readily enough, for, not caring to dress, she did not intend to go into the parlor that evening. In the absence of young men to flirt with, I am not sure but that she had an indistinct idea of flirting with her own father; certainly she would have campaigned against the old gentleman had he been what Mrs. McDoodle thought he was—the only man in the world.

"Julia," said he, shutting the door, "I think it is about time you quit having so much to do with young De Lollipop."

This was the young lady's opportunity. She had long been dying for a grievance.

"Give up Augustus, papa?" she cried.

"Yes, daughter; his habits are bad."

This was about the weakest argument that Mr. McDoodle could have advanced, and had he known as much about the female heart as he did about bar soap and pot and pearl ashes, he would have been aware of it. There is a romance about the young man who smokes some, drinks a little, and gambles a great deal, peculiarly fascinating to the young lady whose heroes are fashioned after the paradoxical patterns of fascinating viciousness found in popular novels.

"You are prejudiced, papa," she said; "some malicious person has been telling you lies about Gus."

"No; a friend of mine saw him out at Fordham last week, and he bet on the losing horse."

Julia didn't like that. It was bad enough to bet —but on the losing horse! Dreadful! However, the parent being set against the thing, custom made it imperative that the daughter should insist upon it, though she at heart cared no more for the young man than she did for one of the Chinese mandarins that were nodding on the mantle-shelf.

Sweet are the uses of perversity to the feminine mind!

So she at once declared that he loved her, and that she loved him dearly, and she never, never, would give him up.

"I should die, papa," she said.

"Nonsense; I'd go into the tombstone business if girls died so easy," returned the old gentleman.

Upon which the fountains of the deep Julia were broken up and she burst into tears, sobbing that she "nev-nev-never would treat poor Augustus so un-un-unkindly, and that if she did-did-didn't

marry him she never would mar-mar-marry anybody."

"But he's ruined, girl," said the stern parent, betrayed by this unexpected depth of devotion into bringing up his heaviest artillery sooner than he had intended.

"Wh-wh-what? Ruined?" asked Julia, opening her eyes through the deluge—letting her soul come to the windows of the ark, as it were.

"Bu'sted—smashed—gone to thunder," replied the old gentleman.

"Irretrievably, papa?"

"Erie? Erie? yes, Erie-trievably. (Mr. McDoodle, with all his dickering had done nothing in dictionaries.) That was what did it."

Julia paused a moment; a look of almost divine

resignation stole over her face: "I will never disobey a parent's wishes," she said, looking up through her tears; "no, I will always be obedient, though my heart should break, papa," and she kissed her father filially on the left cheek.

Certainly she lost no time in complying with her father's wishes—dutiful daughter. Tired as she was with the previous evening's excitement, before she laid her head on her pillow that night, she wrote a note to Augustus De Lollipop (spelling beautiful this time with a little b) in which she said that her papa disapproved of their intimacy, and that, as it made people talk, it had better be discontinued, though there really was nothing in it. If he liked her more than she had imagined he did, she was really very sorry for it, and now for the first time saw how imprudent she had been. She liked him very well as a friend, but could never entertain any other feelings for him, and, even if she could, would never marry against her father's wishes. Her father would never be induced to give his consent under any circumstances, owing to some things which had come to his knowledge, &c., &c., &c.

I rather think that was a settler. She hadn't loved him, and didn't, and couldn't, and wouldn't if she could. If he did not see his case was hopeless in the light of that letter, I pity the young man. Moreover, it was contrived that after all he should only have himself to reproach. "Owing to some things, &c., &c., &c.," left a wide field for speculation on his part as to what he had done, and he could roam through it at leisure.

What do you think was the effect of that letter on Augustus? What would it be on any young man? But I will not repeat the old story of a broken heart, and a noble career blighted by the faithlessness and cruelty of woman.

It is enough to say that he abandoned business, went into politics, made speeches at ward meetings, and at last accounts was in danger of being run for Congress.

Contemplating this wreck and ruin, am I not right in arraigning the young woman who wrought it for Wickedness?

Chapter 6.

The end was not yet.

The young lady by no means intended to immolate herself on the altar of duty, for nothing. Her parents were reminded nearly every hour of the day of the sacrifice she had made for them. No request of hers could be denied, all her extravagances must be gratified.

It was found necessary to bind up her lacerated affections with goods of cost and pearls of price. Her poor fluttering heart beat beneath a number of new bodices, and her aching brows were bound by a band of jewels she had long aspired to, but for which she had never dared ask.

Moreover, notwithstanding all that was done for the assuagement of her sorrows, she still insisted on being a blasted being.

She read melancholy poetry in bed by gas-light to the injury of her eyes.

She went sadly about the house, and looked reproachfully at papa when he asked if he should not send her another piece of mutton.

She got herself up in a sort of mitigated affliction style, to the great worriment of Finette, on whom all the trouble fell. She even put the O'Flaherty to her wits'-end by insisting on trying a

widow's cap, just to see how 'twould look. But, however deep her woe, she never forgot to crimp her hair nor omitted to give a touch of bistre to her eyes—this latter thing being more necessary now than ever.

She took to keeping a diary and writing verses, bottling her tears in poesy that she and others might contemplate them at leisure.

More than this, she insisted on having her poetry published, and the paternal McDoodle on his way down town each morning had to call at numerous newspaper establishments, true to his instincts always finding his way into the business-offices.

On handing his contributions across the counter he was somewhat surprised at the sum total demanded of him for insertion, but on going over the lyrics after publication, and multiplying the number of lines by the price per line, he invariably found that the bill was correct.

Julia, on her part, was delighted with the page on which she was published. It was the most expensive column in the paper her papa told her; and tears nearly came to his eyes when he reflected how well that money and space could have been utilitized in setting forth the value and virtues of his "best bar," or "Intended for the toilet alone."

Indeed he might have made his expenditure available, had the idea occurred to him, for the public, after becoming familiar with Julia (I quote from her own statement of the situation) sitting in her

> "———lone, lone bower
> All through the sad, sad day,
> And weeping every hour
> For one far, far away,"

morning after morning in the "Personals" of the *Herald*, began to speculate with some curiosity as to what the climax of this ingenious but expensive

dodge was to be. They looked forward to see her sorrows alleviated by a hair lotion or something of the kind; and had her papa been so minded, he could have advertised, on alternate days, that the distressed Julia would find relief in a package of McDoodle & Co.'s "Best Brown Windsor," or that a cake of that firm's "Honey-scented" was balm to the wounded breast.

It always seemed rather strange to me that no other shrewd dealer availed himself in some such way of Julia's sad measures—(her motto for the moment was measures not men, and she took up with lame ones)—but none did, if I remember rightly. All were averse to her lyrics.

I think it very Wicked to write and publish such verses even in advertising columns. Yet a great many young ladies, as I am well aware, write and publish worse ones, occasionally even asking to be paid for them without thinking they do very wrong.

Chapter 7.

Really I do think that some genuine tribulation underlaid our young lady's sad habiliments—the hatchment was not hung out altogether causelessly.

It was not, however, that she would see her Augustus no more, no more, that she sorrowed; but because there seemed a likelihood that she had taken her last look at old Biggs—at least in the character of a suitor.

Since the ball when she flirted so outrageously with Captain Fitzfaddle he had not been near her, and it was reported that he was actually going to marry Clara Tolderol, who was awkward, and didn't know how to "entertain company."

Didn't know how to entertain company! Does any one realize the wilderness of barbarism which that implies to the feminine understanding?

That Julia harbored any very deep affection for Old Biggs I do not for one moment believe; but has there not been a new commandment pronounced by the stern voice of society to the repeal of about all the old ones, viz.:

Thou shalt love thy Nabob as thyself? And is not this considered as specially binding on young ladies?

In any event she didn't want to see him marry Clara, who was her most intimate friend, and so would enjoy a triumph over her to the full.

Think of having to stand up as bridesmaid to a girl who had not half her attractions, playing second fiddle instead of first before a great and critical audience in Grace Church.

Of course the general comment would be that, in the long run, behavior told better than good looks;

and that the steadiest girls were sure to get the best husbands—meaning men like old Biggs.

The thing was too fearful to contemplate, and she turned from it with a shudder and shiver of her white shoulders to scold the O'Flaherty for something in which she was nowise to blame.

Thus it was that when Papa McDoodle came home one evening with a piece of news which was duly communicated to Julia through that most legitimate channel, Mamma McDoodle, she brightened up, and the next morning put more color in her cheeks than she had been showing lately. There were more strawberries and less cream.

About the same time she discarded her diary, put her rhyming dictionary and various aids to English composition on back shelves, and came out of the bower in which she had been chronically sitting for a month or two past. She also laid aside the robes of mitigated affliction, and attired herself in hues as gay and variegated as the autumn's forests were then putting on.

The news which wrought all this change was simply that old Biggs had formally requested permission to present himself as a candidate for her virgin affectations.

That waxy but worthy gentleman indulged in no nonsense over the preliminaries; there was Julia, with her youth and sympathies, and paniers, and like sweet incumbrances in one scale; he simply proposed to throw himself into the other; and if he could not pile in sufficient securities and collaterals to bring her down, he expressed himself content to "go up."

On Julia's mamma explaining the situation to her, she said she would see about it. Now when a young lady says that, you may consider a thing done. Seeing in such cases is doing, as well as believing.

How the courtship sped I cannot narrate in detail, for I have no experience in that line. Of course Mr. Biggs took the young lady to the opera, and sent her diamonds and things.

His charming presents—if only combined with his agreeable absence—would doubtless have won the most obdurate female heart.

The wheeziness, which we have already noticed, must have interfered somewhat with the romance of the affair; and I scarce think the young lady could have requested him "to breathe those words of love once more;" nor do I imagine he would have complied with the request had it been made—for, as has once before been hinted, he had no breath to spare.

Very certain am I that I should not like to have old Biggs put his arm round my waist, though I do know a number of persons of both sexes who would consent to be embraced by a cuttle-fish for a consideration.

Think of it! One of the finest houses on the Avenue; one of the best equipages in the park; servants without end—often without aim; money galore—youth and beauty all her own; and the only inconvenience, a husband—he apoplectic.

So it is little wonder that Julia, after a careful estimate of old Biggs' five-twenties, consented to take upon herself the Bonds.

In the end Augustus had less reason to complain than others. She only jilted him—she married Biggs. He (worthy member of the Chamber of Commerce), badly as he may have swindled soldiers, outrageously as he may have adulterated tea, sugar, and coffee, did not deserve the terrible, but veiled, retribution which you see standing by his side.

This last act of Julia's (in my opinion) was not the least wicked of her life, and fairly establishes her right to stand on the title-page of my little book. For, clearly enough, she sold herself—and I do not

see that getting more for herself than she was worth betters the thing at all. Her hollow-eyed sisters (those gerfalcons of the night) who hawk themselves upon the street corners, do no more than this, yet society refuses to recognize them—perhaps because they did not in the beginning drive better bargains for themselves.

But it is not my intention to preach—which in this case were really to practise on the good nature of the reader.

Here is the wedding—you see quite as much of it as did the chief mourners who sat in the front pew and smelt the orange blossoms in the air. Could the

artist but have put in the low swell of the jubilant organ the thing would be complete. You see the

solemn church, with its groined aisles — and have an excellent view of the nave. Prominent in the foreground stands the white-robed clergyman; and mark how piously he waves his outstretched hands, sanctioning the principles and blessing the witnesses of the occasion.

What are the wild waves saying?

"Let us spray."

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